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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a project which was set up to provide secondary students with an opportunity to examine, analyze, and reflect on the role of children and youth in the first half-century of the American republic and draw meaningful comparisons with their own experience in contemporary American society. Thirty-five students, enrolled in a one-semester anthropology course, participated in the project. Through a field trip to Old Sturbridge Village students were expected to recognize that the role of young people in society has changed in significant ways over the past 200 years; identify specific changes; recognize that the changing role of young people is only one reflection of the vast change of society; and apply to their examination of American society a number of basic concepts and skills developed in their anthropology class. The field trip was designed to give students an opportunity through role-playing to put themselves in the situation of a young person in an early American village. Students were given data sheets and other information to prepare them for their roles. In addition, the class analyzed more than 100 documents related to work during the time of the early republic, such as diaries, letters, financial records, laws, apprenticeship indentures, newspaper articles, and advertisements. An evaluation and critique of the learning experience concludes the document. (Author/JR)

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN EARLY AMERICA:
A CASE STUDY OF A BICENTENNIAL SOCIAL STUDIES PROJECT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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conducted at
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School
Acton, Mass.
(1975-1976)

by
Fran Pratt
for
The World of Work Project
Old Sturbridge Village

Introduction

This project was set up to provide students at the upper secondary level (grades 11-12) with an opportunity to examine, analyze, and reflect on the role of children and youth in the first half century of the American republic and draw meaningful comparisons with their own experience in contemporary American society. Thirty-five students, enrolled in a semester Anthropology course, participated in the project. From this learning experience, it was expected that students would:

1. Recognize that the role of young people in society has changed in very significant ways over the past 200 years.
2. Identify specific changes in the role of youth and draw hypotheses which might explain these changes.
3. Recognize that the changing role of young people is only one reflection of the vast changes in the whole society as it has proceeded from a basically agrarian to a predominantly industrial-commercial society.
4. Apply to their examination of American society a number of basic concepts and skills developed in their Anthropology class, including:
 - a. The meaning of "complex society" and how complexity reflects and affects the life-style of the people.
 - b. The role of specialization and division of labor and how these increase as society becomes more complex.
 - c. The use of status systems as a means of regulating the behavior of groups and individuals.

- d. The division of roles in society by age and sex.
- e. The use of technology and how it reflects and affects the nature of the society.
- f. The application of a "scientific method" to the study of human culture by examining data, drawing inferences, and arriving at reasonable conclusions and generalizations.

The sequence of activities for the project was as follows:

Day 1 - Orientation and general information about the project.

Day 2 - Field trip to Old Sturbridge Village.

Day 3 - Follow-up discussion on the field trip.

Day 4 - Slide presentation on work in a New England village.

Days 5-7 - Small group analyses of documents from the period of the early American republic.

Day 8 - Small group discussion of results of analysis and large group preparation for final feedback session.

Day 9 - Large group feedback session to compare conclusions of small groups and arrive at generalizations.

The Field Trip

The trip to Old Sturbridge Village was designed to give students an opportunity through role-playing to put themselves in the situation of a young person in an early American village. Each student was asked to imagine that, as the bus departed from the high school, the twentieth century was being left behind. We would arrive at Old Sturbridge Village in the year 1824.

Our first stop at the village was the Museum Education Center, where Martin Sleeper, Director of the World of Work Project, talked

briefly with the students about the World of Work Project and about why it might be worthwhile to study about work as a way of understanding human experience. With the use of some slides, he further prepared the students for the experience of touring the village.

In order to help students identify with a specific role, each student was given one data sheet for a specific family living in Sturbridge Village in 1824. From the data sheet they were to select one of the children born between 1806 and 1816 to identify with. Throughout the day, they would try to imagine himself as being that person and would gather as much information as possible about what that person's life would be like in 1824.

The data sheets were taken from the "Thirty-five Families" packet available from the Museum Education Center at Old Sturbridge Village. Each data sheet contained basic data on one Sturbridge family, including the names and ages of parents, children, dates of marriages and deaths, father's occupation, a list of taxable properties, and the rank of the family on the tax list as compared to taxes paid by the entire roll of 318 taxpayers.

Along with the data sheet, each student was given a set of instructions for using their time and gathering "field notes" during their visit to the village. Instructions called for writing down basic information about themselves and their families on a cover sheet to which they would attach pages of field notes on their experiences during the day.

All students were asked to visit particular exhibits--the Freeman Farm, the one-room school house, the Asa Knight Store, and

one of the residences located around the village commons. If their father's occupation (according to the data sheet) was associated with a particular exhibit such as a craft shop, they were also asked to visit that exhibit. Beyond these requirements, they could visit whatever else interested them within the time available.

At each exhibit they were asked to play their role and imagine how they would fit into the picture as a young person of that time. For example, at the Freeman Farm they would ask themselves which of the jobs on the farm they would or would not be involved with, which of the artifacts on display would be connected to their own daily activities, etc. They were also encouraged to supplement their own observations by talking with the interpreters at the exhibits and asking questions relating to their role.

The following are a few extracts from student field notes:

Whole family had to work on farm. I think they may have had to struggle to get their food and needs. I say this because income was rather low for a large family. (7 kids in family)

(blacksmith's daughter) The five year old girl could pump the bellows and that's about it. It was impossible for a girl to be a blacksmith. It was socially unacceptable.

The house we live in is very small. It has one room and we all sleep up in the loft. Most of the work is done outside of the house. The lighting was very poor. The rich people have a room for weaving and many other rooms.

My brothers and sisters and I go to this school. We must bring wood for the stove. Sometimes it gets very cold. Before I come to school I have to milk the cows. We come here 5½ days a week. We read the Bible every day. I have to come in the winter because I'm older and they need me to work at home. They hit us a lot if we misbehave. The school is not too big, but seats many students. When I am 14 I don't have to go to school. I will return to work at home. When I am older I will probably work in a factory. The school house has poor lighting (candle). We are give a slate board, pencils, quill pens. Each section has a different subject. Teacher has good control of the class. We have to be very manorly and curtsee. (sec)

While some students did a much better job than others of really adopting a role, the field notes seemed to indicate that all of the students gained some valid insights into the nature of life in the early New England village--insights on which we could build in our later activities.

Slide Presentation

The slides used in class were acquired from the Museum Education Center and depicted the work of early New Englanders. The first series of slides were arranged to show the seasonal sequence of work on the farm. Activities included field work (plowing, planting, cultivating, and harvesting), caring for animals, shearing sheep, cutting and stacking firewood, making fences, the process of producing maple syrup and sugar, and general maintenance of the farm. A second series of slides depicted the work for women and girls on the farm, such as cooking, making cheese, processing cloth, tending the house garden, washing and ironing clothes, and feeding the animals. A final sequence of slides illustrated work in the craft shops and early mills.

The slides proved to be a very useful means of supplementing, ordering, and synthesizing the observations made by students on the field trip. Discussions during and after the slide presentation focused attention^{on} such things as:

1. The ways in which physical environment and seasonal changes regulated the lives and activities on the farm.
2. The diversity of knowledge and skills demanded of people on the farm.

3. The function of the nuclear family as a productive economic unit in which all members participated.
4. The role of fathers and mothers as co-workers and teachers of their sons and daughters.
5. The clear distinction between the roles of males and females on the farm.
6. The alteration of work environments that came with the mills and how this would affect the family, the independence of the worker, economic security, attitudes toward the physical environment, etc.

From this point it was easy to begin establishing significant changes in the work patterns of Americans over the past two hundred years, and to consider how these changes would help to explain other aspects of the changing American scene.

Analysis of Documents

All of the foregoing activities were preparatory to what was considered to be the heart of the project--a careful analysis of more than 100 documents related to work during the time of the early republic. The documents, which were gleaned from a variety of sources, represented a wide range of perspectives. Included were diaries, letters, memoirs, financial records, laws, apprenticeship indentures, newspaper articles, advertisements, statements of rules and regulations, reports, and selections from trade manuals and school books. With a few exceptions, all of the documents shared three common characteristics: (1) They dealt with New England. (2) They represented the period of 1790-1840, give or take a few years. (3) They specifically related to the role of children and

youth.

Each document, which might be from one to ten pages, was numbered for identification and placed in one of six envelopes according to the following topics:

- Set I - Schools (28 documents)
- Set II - Apprenticeship (10 documents)
- Set III - Paupers (17 documents)
- Set IV - Delinquency (15 documents)
- Set V - Factories (34 documents)
- Set VI - Seamanship (6 documents)

Originally it was planned to include a seventh set of documents relating to work on the farm. But it was felt that most students through the field trip and slide presentation had a good basic understanding of the farm operation and that it would be more valuable to use the limited time available to focus on other aspects of life during the period.

There is a limit to how long students can keep their attention and interest when working with historical documents. In order to make the task more manageable and less tedious,,the class was divided into four groups. Each group was given certain packets of documents to examine:

- Group 1 - Analyzed Set I (Schools)
- Group 2 - Analyzed Sets II and VI (Apprenticeship and Seamanship)
- Group 3 - Analyzed Sets III and IV (Paupers and Delinquency)
- Group 4 - Analyzed Set V (Factories)

With each set of documents, a set of "study questions" was supplied for carrying out the analyses. Below is the list of questions for each set:

- Set I: Schools (Compare each of the following to schools today.)
1. Purposes of education--why have kids go to school?
 2. Attendance requirements--what ages, hours in school, number of days, etc.
 3. Who decides the answers to the questions above?

4. What kinds of facilities, furnishings, and materials were provided for education?
5. What kind of training or preparation was required for teachers?
6. What did the curriculum include?
7. What types of extracurricular activities were provided?
8. What sort of behavior was expected of students?
9. What sort of behavior was expected of teachers?
10. How was student behavior controlled?
11. How was teacher behavior controlled?
12. In general, how much choice did a student have about going to school and about what he did in school?

Set II: Apprenticeship

1. List as many purposes as you can for the apprenticeship system. Indicate which ones were most important and why.
2. Does school today serve about the same purposes as apprenticeship did earlier? Are the main purposes the same?
3. Who decided that someone would become an apprentice? (Note that you may have more than one answer to this.)
4. At what age would someone become an apprentice? Until what age would someone remain an apprentice? Would it be the same for boys and girls?
5. What kind of behavior was expected of apprentices? What kinds of behavior were prohibited?
6. What might happen if an apprentice did not meet expectations for his behavior?
7. What did an apprentice get in return for his service?
8. Were apprentices generally happy or content with their situations?
9. If you could choose between apprenticeship and school, what would be your choice? Why?

Set III: Paupers

1. What caused people to become paupers?
2. How did society feel about paupers?
3. What provisions did society make for the poor in general?
4. What provisions did society especially make for poor children and young people.
5. What, if anything, did society expect in return for services provided to the poor.
6. In what ways, if any, were the poor taken advantage of? How and by whom?
7. What efforts were made to reform the methods for dealing with poverty and with paupers?
8. Consider each of the above questions in regard to the situation as you know it today. Is the situation basically the same or different? Explain.

Set IV: Delinquency

1. Why and how did young people become delinquents? List as many factors as you can.
2. Were delinquents more likely to be boys or girls? Why?
3. At what ages might someone be considered a "delinquent"?

4. What types of crimes were commonly committed by delinquents?
5. What were the primary methods used for dealing with delinquents and delinquency? Were the methods primarily "preventive" or "punitive"?
6. How effective were these methods of dealing with delinquency?
7. What efforts were made to reform the system of dealing with delinquency?
8. Compare each of the above questions with the situation as you know it today. Is the situation basically the same or different? Explain.

Set V: Factories

1. Who made up the work force of factories?
2. At what ages did people go to work in the factories?
3. What wages did people receive? How was this affected by age and sex?
4. What were typical working conditions?
5. How did people at that time (public at large), feel about factories as opposed to farms and small craft shops?
6. What, if anything, did factory owners do to promote a positive image of the factory?
7. In what ways did factory owners try to regulate the lives of workers outside of their working hours?
8. What efforts were made toward reform of conditions for factory workers or solutions to problems created by factories?
9. If you had the choice of working on your family's farm or going into a factory in that period, which would you choose? Why?

Set VI: Seamanship

1. At what age might a boy go to sea? (Indicate any ages your documents provide, including the earliest age.)
2. What kinds of behavior were expected from boys at sea? What kinds of behavior were prohibited?
3. How was the behavior of boys at sea controlled?
4. Were boys at sea abused? Was there any protection from abuse?
5. What kinds of work did boys do aboard ship?
6. Did serving aboard ship as a boy provide real opportunity for advancement?
7. Do you think having boys go to sea was a good way to train them for a career? Can you think of a better alternative for training seamen?

In addition to the above, students were asked to list any "unanswered" questions that were raised in their own minds by analyzing the documents.

Each group of students was provided with a supply of "document analysis" forms. At the top of each form they would write just one of the study questions. Then each student would choose a document from the packet, analyze the contents, and record on the appropriate sheets any information that applied to each particular question. When a student had completed analysis of one document, he would immediately proceed to another until each document had been analyzed by at least one person in the group. On completion of the analysis of all the documents, the group would check over the total results and discuss the questions together.

Note that in each set of questions, most of the questions are of the sort of straightforward information questions which can be answered directly from the documents. However, each set also contains at least one question in which the student is asked to make a judgment about how past and present conditions compare, about a decision he might make, etc. It is the responses to these judgemental questions which reveal the most about the perceptions of the students regarding conditions in the past and their own situations today. Following are some samples:

Question: If you could choose between apprenticeship and school, what would be your choice? Why?

School definitely. Much more opportunity for expansion. One is tied to an apprenticeship and can't break contract unless unhappy with job.

I definitely would choose school because of the greater opportunity to expand your mind and learn, rather than be limited to one job.

School gives more freedom in learning than apprenticeship which deals mainly with one subject, and if you don't like what you are apprenticed for you are stuck.

Question: Compare each of the above questions (on delinquency) with the situation as you know it today. Is the situation basically the same or different? Explain.

Today you find that a lot of delinquents come from broken families, or from divorced parents who don't care where their kids are or who they're with, etc. A lot of delinquents from the ghetto area become delinquents because they are poor, their houses aren't fit for living in, one or both parents are dead or divorced, and they (the parents) don't really care where their kids are.

Question: If you had the choice of working on your family's farm or going into a factory in that period, which would you choose? Why?

The farm because at the factory I would get paid very little because of my age, but on the farm I would be helping my family subsist.

The farm because the conditions at the factory were terrible, and the money made wasn't worth the work and you'd most likely be far from your family.

I'm sure it depends on your home life. If it was a good one, I would choose the farm. The factories were nightmarish. Paid little and under very unhealthy conditions.

If you have a large family it would be more profitable to have the family working at a factory rather than a farm.

If you worked at a factory you couldn't get a good education, if any at all.

On the farm, because by reading this paper factory life sounds very monotonous.

I would probably choose to work on my family's farm, because the factories were bad for your health.

Question: Do you think having boys go to sea was a good way to train them for a career? Can you think of a better alternative for training seamen?

If being a seaman is the career a boy wants, actually training aboard a ship from an early age is a good system. But the system used in the 1800s is far too unreasonable. There should be federal standards of punishment allowed, and the boy should have the option to get out of the service when he wants to.

Feedback

Prior to the general feedback session, each small group briefly discussed the outcome of its analyses of documents related to each topic. In the large group feedback session, a number of criteria were first established by which meaningful comparisons could be made in the roles of young people in Early American society as compared to their situation today. As each criterion was discussed, the groups were asked to contribute whatever observations they could based on whichever sets of documents they had examined. The criteria for comparison which the students established included:

1. The status of young people as workers.
2. The responsibilities placed upon the young.
3. The role of the young as producers and consumers.
4. The amount of schooling (or general education) that young people would receive.
5. The degree to which young people would be prepared for a specific vocation or career.
6. The value placed on education by the society.
7. The exploitation of young people's time and labor.
8. The degree to which young people had a voice in society.
9. The degree to which young people could exercise choice.
10. The expectations of the society regarding the behavior of the young.
11. The methods used by society to control the behavior of the young.
12. The legal situation of the young.

Unfortunately, time at this point was limited, and a full exploration of all these issues was impossible, but the following are some examples of conclusions reached by the students:

1. The status of young workers was generally low in early America, and young people today can usually qualify only for low status jobs.
2. Young people in early America had greater responsibilities

than young people today, and they were given responsibility at an earlier age.

3. Young people in early America were mainly producers; today they are mainly consumers.
4. Young people today receive considerably more in the way of general education, but usually much less in the way of preparation for a specific vocation or career.
5. Formal education is more highly valued in contemporary society, and it is also more necessary for survival.
6. There was much greater exploitation of young people in early American society; but sometimes modern youth are exploited in more subtle ways.
7. Young people today have a larger voice, both in matters of personal choice and in matters affecting society at large.
8. The society still has fairly rigid standards for the behavior of the young, but they are not as rigid as the standards of the past.
9. Society today is less likely to use corporal punishments and other severe methods to control the behavior of the young.

While it was never so expressed, it would seem that generally students left the project feeling that, in most respects, it was better to be young today than it was in the so-called "good old days."

Visitors

At various times during the project, there were visitors to the class who had expressed an interest in the project. These

included the department chairman, another social studies teacher (who also accompanied the group on the field trip), the director and assistant director of the school's Career Education Program (which was initiated this year), and the director of the World of Work Project, Martin Sleeper, who conducted the feedback session for one of the two classes involved.

Evaluation and Critique

Because time did not allow (more on this below), no formal evaluation of learning outcomes was made. However, time was taken after completion of the project for a brief evaluative discussion with the students. They were asked to consider four questions:

1. Did you enjoy working on the project?
2. Was it worth doing?
3. Did you find that you could apply concepts that you developed in the Anthropology course?
4. Would you recommend repeating this project with next year's students?

The general response to all of these questions was yes. No one felt that their time had been wasted, and all agreed that the project had been worthwhile and should be repeated with some modifications. There were a few students who said that spending three class periods analyzing the documents had become tedious. Some also felt that there were too many documents (especially in the set on factories), and that several of the documents were repetitious in terms of the type of information they contained. In spite of these drawbacks, the general attitude toward the project was favorable.

From the teacher's standpoint there were significant gaps between the way the project was conceived and the way it was carried

out. These problems are described below along with some recommendations for closing the gaps between theory and practice.

1. The Problem of Time

Before this special project on "Children and Youth in Early America" was developed, a full schedule of activities had already been established for the half-year Anthropology course. In terms of doing justice to the rest of the course, it was very difficult to find two weeks to devote to this special project. The problem was further complicated by the fact that three days of school were cancelled due to snowstorms. Some activities that had been originally planned, such as a formal evaluation of learning outcomes and a discussion of a fictional case study written especially for the project, had to be sacrificed. (A copy of "The Case of Peter" is included with the supplementary documents accompanying this report, even though it was not used in class.) The time for feedback discussion was cut short, especially in regard to how the basic concepts developed in the Anthropology course could be applied to the project. (See item 4 on pages 1-2 of this report.)

Recommendation: Plan at least three weeks for the project or limit the objectives to fit those activities for which there is sufficient time. Make specific plans for a formal evaluation that would better document the learning outcomes.

2. The Problem of Discontinuity

The field trip had to be conducted early in the course before students had developed concepts and skills that would have enabled them to better analyze what they experienced at Old Sturbridge Village. The field trip had to be conducted on September 22,

simply because that was the only date on which the Village could accomodate the group. At the time reservations were made, the Village calendar for school visits was already full. (Fortunately, September 22 turned out to be a beautiful day.)

After the field trip, several weeks intervened before the analysis of documents began, because it was decided that time was needed to develop the concepts and skills which would enable the students to perform a successful analysis of the material.

Feedback sessions were scheduled to take place right after the documents were analyzed, which happened to be the two days just before the Christmas vacation. Because of snowstorms, school was cancelled on these two days and the discussion had to be rescheduled for the first week in January. By that time it was difficult to restore the train of thought and to renew the interest.

Recommendation: Schedule the field trip months in advance so that you control the schedule of activities rather than being governed by the over-crowded calendar of the Village. Avoid planning too close to vacation schedules, and pray for bonny weather.

3. The Problem of Identifying with Roles

Many of these upper class students had little or no experience with role playing and found it difficult to actually assume the identify of another person who had lived long ago. They also had little experience with interviewing, and most failed to take advantage of what the village interpreters might have to offer. This was clearly evident in the written "field notes" turned in by the students after their visit to the village.

Recommendation: Prior to the field trip, give some illustra-

tions of the types of field notes that might be made by a person really identifying with a role as compared with the notes of someone who has not really assumed the role. (e.g. "My father's blacksmith shop is . . ." as opposed to "I found the blacksmith shop very interesting because . . .") Have students plan before the visit some of the questions that they might ask of interpreters. If possible, alert interpreters in advance of the students' visit. Explain what the students will be doing, and encourage the interpreters to "break the ice" by initiating discussions with the students whenever time permits.

4. The Problem of Grouping

Anthropology is offered at ABRHS as an elective open to all students. Consequently the classes are very heterogeneous in terms of ability, interest, and level of achievement. Ideally, in such a situation the slower students or under-achievers should profit from their association with brighter and more motivated students.

In fact, when students were allowed to form their own groups, the tendency was for "birds of a feather to flock together." Perhaps this is due largely to the fact that in most classes they are accustomed to homogeneous grouping. As might be expected, groups of high ability performed much more careful analyses of the documents and reached deeper insights than other groups. These insights were never fully shared with the class in general, largely because of the limited time for feedback. In the few groups that were mixed, bright students and slower students tended to work as individuals with little sharing of information and ideas.

Recommendation: Prior to beginning group activities, arrange mixed groups and do some human relations activities that will

help more capable and less capable students to relate to each other and work successfully together.

In spite of the problems described above, the project could be described as successful. Significant learning resulted for both the students and the teacher, and in the few weeks remaining in the course it was possible to refer back to ideas developed in the project and apply them to new situations. This was particularly true when the class did a case study of an Indian village in the Peruvian Andes where a team of social scientists, in cooperation with the Peruvian government, attempted to change centuries-old patterns of life and improve the quality of life by "modernization." With modification along the lines described above, the project shows promise of being a very worthwhile addition to the Anthropology course as well as a model for learning that might be useful in other subjects.

THE CASE OF PETER

Let's imagine a boy, born in 1776, when the thirteen Atlantic colonies defiantly announced their independence from England. Our boy, whom we shall call Peter, was thirteen years old when George Washington became president of the new republic. Were Peter alive today, we might call him "adolescent," "junior high school student," or just "teenager." Whatever he was in 1789, he was none of these, for these were terms yet to be invented.

Since Peter is a product of our imagination, we may make of him whatever we like--at least within the range of historical possibilities. We might apprentice him to a blacksmith or a boot-maker. We could set him up as a clerk in a village store. Or, under the tutelage of the village minister, we might begin to prepare him for the clergy. If we like, we can give him a more glamorous role. Let him run off to Boston and sign on his uncle's ship as a cabin boy. He was too young for the revolution, but by 1812 and the "second war for independence," he could be master of his own vessel and achieve fame along with John Paul Jones and Oliver Hazard Perry. But let's not get carried away.

Instead, we will go with the majority and let him be a farmer. We'll give him the advantage of being his father's oldest and most favored son, destined to inherit the family farm when father dies.

Peter is a young man, married and with children of his own, when a single purchase of land doubles the size of his already vast country. The possibilities now stretch 2000 miles westward to the magnificent Rockies. His grandson, in 1849, will cross those mountains on his way to California and will never return to

New England. As for himself, Peter never found it difficult to resist the temptation to go West as so many of his neighbors did, abandoning the stubborn stony ground of Massachusetts for better land beyond the Berkshires and Catskills. To Peter, even Ohio or New York seem a million miles away--as far as England or India. And Peter is set in his ways. Around him the world is changing.

At thirty-eight Peter sees the first of his own children leave home to carve out his own niche in a society that is already becoming far more complex than the world of Peter's youth. The son has no desire to remain at home and till the soil as his father did. He hopes for better things than bondage to the farm.

New institutions are emerging as new problems and prospects present themselves to the American people. At the same time, old institutions are forced to modify to meet the demands of change. Even in his own village Peter can see the changes taking place. The population has increased, both in number and variety. There is greater division of labor; and jobs that his father would have done himself, Peter now turns over to craftsmen in the village who can often do them better and faster. Peter's wife no longer makes soap or candles. She buys them in the village store where the shelves are stocked with products from as far away as China. The village has its own newspaper, now supported more by advertisements than by subscriptions. Strangers are frequently seen on the village streets; and boarders, once rare, are now common in the homes. There is a school which Peter's children attend for a good part of the year. There is also a bank, and Peter finds himself relying more and more on money, less and less on his ability to directly exchange

his goods and services for what he needs.

In larger towns nearby, textile mills or factories have made their appearance. Peter doesn't like the mills, but two of his daughters will leave home to become weavers in the factory. Although he doesn't like the factory, he does like what it produces. It has been some time since he wore his last set of homespun clothes. Peter doesn't realize that he is witnessing the birth of the world's greatest industrial superpower. But his youngest daughter, born when he is 43, will live until the turn of the next century by which time the United States will be producing more manufactured goods than any other country of the world.

Have we gone far enough? Do we need to catalog all the innovations that will appear during Peter's lifetime--the Erie Canal, the clipper ships, the steamboats, the railroads, the telegraph, etc.? Let's go just a bit further. Suppose that Peter lives to a very ripe old age, say ninety. He will witness the emergence of genuinely American schools of literature, art, and music, all dealing with American themes. During his lifetime, the first oil well will be drilled, the Bessemer process of making steel will be developed, and the first labor unions will be formed. Before he dies, the Union will grow from thirteen to thirty-five states, split for four years of bloody civil war, and finally be reunited. Before he dies, he will have lived under the administrations of seventeen presidents of the United States.

It is tempting to think of our own era as a very special age, a time when change moves at such a rapid pace that we might not be capable of making the necessary adjustments to prevent the breakdown

of society as we know it. To describe our dilemma, Alvin Toffler has invented the term "future shock." But if we consider the past in terms of a single lifetime, such as Peter's, perhaps we will gain a better perspective and recognize that our age is not so special after all. If humans are particularly adaptable creatures, then Americans must be very "human." Of all the traditions that have characterized American life over the past two centuries, perhaps the most important and the most enduring is the tradition of change.